

The SaaS Stack Audit

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Your software bill grew one good idea at a time. Thirty minutes, one page, four columns.

Step 1 — List it

Every subscription: tool, cost, and the renewal date. Pull from the credit card statement, not memory. Memory protects the guilty. Expect to find 2-4 tools nobody remembers buying — that's normal, and that's money.

Step 2 — The four columns

For each tool, write:

1. **Who actually uses it** (a name, or “nobody knows”)
2. **What it does for us** (one line, in business terms — “sends the invoices,” not “automates AP workflows”)
3. **What we'd lose if it vanished tomorrow** (honestly: “we'd notice in a week” or “we'd be fine by Friday”)
4. **The overlap** (which other tool on the list does the same job)

Step 3 — The three verdicts

- **KILL** — nobody named in column one, or the loss column says “fine by Friday.” Cancel today; most tools have a 30-day grace on data export — grab yours.
- **CONSOLIDATE** — two tools, one job. Keep the one with a named owner. Kill the other this quarter, not today — migrations need a Saturday, not a panic.
- **KEEP + NEGOTIATE** — it earns its price. Now check the renewal date: anything renewing within 60 days gets one email: “We're reviewing spend ahead of renewal — are there volume tiers or plan adjustments we should discuss?” Vendors never volunteer the discount. They almost always have one.

The rule that keeps it clean

Every new tool gets a 90-day trial with a named owner and a “what breaks if we cancel” answer on file. Software should have to earn tenure like everyone else.

Run it quarterly. Stacks creep. The audit takes 30 minutes; the average SMB finds 10-20% of monthly SaaS spend sitting in columns one and four.

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